

GOV AFFAIRS

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE MATTERS



SCAG'S NEW SENIOR GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OFFICER

In January, Felicia Brannon joined SCAG as a Senior Government Affairs Officer. Felicia brings with her over ten years experience in government relations and public administration. Most recently, Felicia served as the Director of Government Relations for Culver City. Felicia holds a Masters in Public Administration from USC and a bachelors degree in Political Science from Cal State Northridge.

For more information about the legislative program, please contact Donald Rhodes, Manager of Public and Government Affairs at 213.236.1840 or rhodes@scag.ca.gov.

Southern California Consensus Program and Advocacy Trip

SCAG and the Southern California Transportation Delegation traveled to Washington DC February 11th–12th to advocate for the Southern California Consensus Program for TEA-21 Reauthorization. This trip was a follow-up to the unprecedented trip made by the delegation in February 2003. The delegation consists of the chairs and chief executive officers of SCAG, LACMTA, RCTC, SANBAG, VCTC, OCTA, Metrolink, and IVAG. A major part of the trip was a briefing on February 11th hosted by Congress Members Juanita Millender-McDonald and Gary Miller, who sit on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Rep. James Oberstar (MN), Ranking Member on the House T&I Committee, and the staff of several congressional offices also attended the briefing. (Please see “From the C2 Group” section of the “LOBBYISTS’ UPDATE” article below.)

Senate Approves SAFETEA/House Approves Another Extension

On February 12th by a vote of 76-21, the Senate approved S. 1072 to reauthorize TEA-21. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) would cost \$318 billion over the six-year period from 2004 through 2009. The White House has indicated that President Bush may veto a transportation bill that costs substantially more than his \$256 billion reauthorization bill. S. 1072 now moves to the House, where on February 11th, a measure that would continue national highways and transit programs through June 30th was approved. HR 3783 or a proposed Senate extension for two months could become the second extension bill, succeeding HR 3088, which expires February 29th.

Governor Delivers State of the State and Releases Budget Proposal

On January 6th Governor Schwarzenegger delivered his first State of the State message. In his speech the Governor discussed the repeal of the tripling of the car tax and his California Recovery Plan, which includes a \$15 billion general obligation bond on the March ballot. The Governor also released his \$76 billion state budget proposal for fiscal year 2004-05 on January 9th. The budget includes a \$4.1 billion for full state reimbursement to local governments of lost VLF revenues. However, it also proposes to shift \$1.3 billion in property tax revenues from cities, counties, special districts and redevelopment agencies on an on-going basis to the ERAF accounts. The proposal includes a suspension of an estimated \$1.1 billion in Proposition 42 transportation funds for the 2004-05 state budget year. In addition, the proposed budget also contains the mid-year transportation cuts proposed by the Governor in November.

Tribal Summit

On February 20th SCAG hosted its second meeting with the tribal governments in the region. Issues discussed at the summit include participation of tribal nations in the SCAG Regional Council, the RTP process, and the growth forecast and development plans coordination. The following elected officials represented SCAG: Bev Perry, Ron Roberts, Marion Ashley, Greg Pettis, Brenda Salas, Deborah Robertson and Cristina Madrid. Representatives of more than half of the 16 federally recognized tribal governments attended the summit.

SCAG Kern COG Joint Meeting

SCAG held a successful joint meeting with the Kern Council of Governments on January 29th in Santa Clarita. Topics discussed included: freight movement, the common corridors of SR 58, I-395, and SR-14, Maglev, the West Coast Corridor, aviation, warehousing, water and the state transformation funding crisis and innovative funding for goods movement. The next meeting is scheduled for August 12th.